

**2008 Concert Season**

**August**

"From Scratch" Brahms's *German Requiem*  
Saturday, 16th August, 2008  
With the Sinfonia of St Andrew's.

**November**

A Cappella Concert  
6pm Sunday, 16 November, 2008  
Please join us for this intimate choral experience.  
#

Phone 3369 4866 for further details or to be placed on our mailing list.  
[www.brisbaneconcertchoir.com.au](http://www.brisbaneconcertchoir.com.au)

**Brisbane Concert Choir at St Andrew's**

Phone (07) 3369 4866  
[chairman@brisbaneconcertchoir.com](mailto:chairman@brisbaneconcertchoir.com)  
[www.brisbaneconcertchoir.com](http://www.brisbaneconcertchoir.com)

*Handel's*  
**Messiah**



with the  
**Sinfonia of  
St Andrew's**  
And soloists  
**Milica Ilic  
Dorothy Williams  
Thomas Moran  
Sam Hartley**  
Sunday, 13th July 2008



### **A Special Touch**

Brisbane Concert Choir performs regularly for weddings at the heritage-listed St Andrew's Uniting Church, as well as many other venues around Brisbane. With a large selection of wedding music available we can suggest repertoire which will blend perfectly with your wedding plans. To find out more call 3369 4866, email [chairman@brisbaneconcertchoir.com](mailto:chairman@brisbaneconcertchoir.com) or check out our website at [www.brisbaneconcertchoir.com](http://www.brisbaneconcertchoir.com)



### **Fancy yourself a singer?**

The Brisbane Concert Choir at St Andrew's welcomes new members. For further information about our audition process, please phone Lynne Maurer on 3369 4866.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

In the event of fire or other emergency, walk promptly to the rear of the building and exit through the glass doors. Do not congregate in the café area, but continue walking up the footpath to ensure that the exits are not blocked.

Assemble across the road outside the Suncorp building until advised by a responsible person that it is safe to re-enter the building.

Only if access to the main glass-door exit is blocked should you attempt to leave via the door to the right of the stage. Please note that these doors open inwards.

**46. Since by man came death** 1 Corinthians 15:21,22

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

**47. Behold I tell you a mystery** 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet.

**48. The trumpet shall sound** 1 Corinthians 15:52b-53

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

**49. Then shall be brought to pass** 1 Corinthians 15:54b (Isaiah 25:8)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**50. O death where is thy sting?** 1 Corinthians 15:55-56 (Hosea 13:14)

O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

**51. But thanks be to God** 1 Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**52. If God be for us** Romans 8:31, 33-34

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

**53. Worthy is the Lamb** Revelation 5:12-13

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

---

**After the Concert**  
**Please Join Us for Supper**  
**in the Hall below the Church**

---

## A word from our Chairman

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you, and thank you for your support. If you are new to our audience, or your contact details have changed since we last saw you, I urge you to complete the form in your programme and return it now or by post or email, so that we can keep you informed of future events.

Although the Choir has been established for 12 years, we have never performed more than a couple of choruses from Handel's *Messiah*. Members have been looking forward to performing the complete work with Debra Shearer-Diricé. We trust that you enjoy our performance of this well-loved piece, which has truly stood the test of time.

We have a busy schedule for the months ahead: our annual Come and Sing 'from scratch' workshop and performance, this year featuring Brahms's *German Requiem* in August, a shared concert at St John's Cathedral in October and a pre-tour concert in November followed by a two-week concert tour to Prague and Vienna. We will also be launching our second CD. During all of this we will continue to fundraise to assist our student members to share the overseas adventure with us.

We hope to see you again at the Brahms event, either singing in the choir for the day, or in the audience for the evening performance!



**Ian Maurer**  
**Chairman - Brisbane Concert Choir**

## A word from St Andrew's Church

For decades, there has been this on going debate about at what time of the year Handel's *Messiah* should be performed—Easter, Advent/Christmas or is it possible to perform it at any time?

For me, this is one of the greatest collections of works that lends itself to being performed 365 days of the year because it encompasses a goodly part of the Christian scriptures.

The beauty and precision of *Messiah* are two of the many attractions of this magnificent work. The skill and enthusiasm of the Brisbane Concert Choir at *St Andrew's*, the Sinfonia of St Andrew's, and the soloists will only enhance this work. Enjoy the magic of this truly beautiful work.

**Reverend Ray Herrmann**  
**Minister - St Andrew's Uniting Church**

## Musical Director

**Dr Debra Shearer-Dirié**



Dr. Debra Shearer-Dirié, originally from Perth, Western Australia, is currently established in Brisbane. With a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Western Australia, Dr Shearer-Dirié began her teaching career in the public and private elementary and high schools of WA. Here she taught both instrumental and choral music. After an exciting encounter with the teachers from the Kodály Intezét in Kecskemét, Hungary, she was accepted into the diploma program and spent the academic year of 1990-91 studying in Hungary. The high standard of music education that she observed there made her eager to

return to her own country to develop a similar system. She was invited to give several in-service sessions for the music educators in WA and was a clinician for the Australian Kodály Society to assist in spreading the word of Kodály and improving the standard of music education in Australia.

Dr Shearer-Dirié holds a Master of Music Education and Doctorate of Music degrees from Indiana University in the United States.. After the completion of a Master of Music Education she turned her sights to choral conducting in pursuit of a Doctoral Degree (with minors in Music Education, Ethnomusicology, and Music History). While studying conducting with Mr Robert Porco, Dr Thomas Dunn and Dr Jan Harrington, Dr Shearer-Dirié became experienced in a broad selection of music. With such a profound composition department at Indiana University, Dr Shearer-Dirié also premiered several contemporary works such as: Jason Haney's *An Die Musik*, Gerardo Dirié's *All is Water* and *Tonos de Archangel*. During her time at Indiana University she was director of the Indiana University Children's and Youth Choir; assistant director to Paul Hillier with the Pro Arte Singers; and director of the International Vocal Ensemble at Indiana University for two consecutive years. From 2000-2001 she was selected as Artistic Director of the Northwest Girlchoir in Seattle Symphony Orchestra, directed by Gerard Schwarz.

After completing her dissertation, Dr Shearer-Dirié was invited to present at the National Conference of the American Choral Director's Association in New York 2003, and at the Australian National Choral Association (ANCA) National conferences in 2004 and 2006. She was appointed Musical Director of Brisbane Concert Choir, and in 2006 founded the Vox Pacifica Chamber Choir, a 16 voice auditioned youth chamber choir. She teaches at the Undergraduate and Graduate levels at the University of Queensland as well as mentoring young conductors in the Queensland region. She is in demand as an adjudicator, clinician, educator and conductor. In 2007 and 2008, Dr Shearer-Dirié served as guest editor for the ANCA National Journal and currently serves on the Queensland State ANCA committee. Her work in 2008 will take her to Perth, Copenhagen, New Zealand, Canberra and Europe.

**34. Unto which of the angels said He at any time** *Hebrews 1:5 (Psalm 2:7)*

For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?

**35. Let all the angels of God worship Him** *Hebrews 1:6b*

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

**36. Thou art gone up on high** *Psalm 68:18 (Ephesians 4:8)*

Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

**37. The Lord gave the word** *Psalm 68:11*

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers.

**38. How beautiful are the feet** *Romans 10:15 (Isaiah 52:7)*

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

**39. Their sound is gone out** *Romans 10:18 (Psalm 19:4)*

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

**40. Why do the nations so furiously rage together?** *Psalm 2:1-2 (Acts 4:25-26)*

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed.

**41. Let us break their bonds asunder** *Psalm 2:3*

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

**42. He that dwelleth in heaven** *Psalm 2:4*

He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.

**42. Thou shalt break them** *Psalm 2:9*

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

**44. Hallelujah** *Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16*

Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

### Part III

**45. I know that my redeemer liveth** *Job 19:25,26; 1Corinthians 15:20*

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand on the latter day upon the earth: and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead.... The first fruits of them that sleep.

## Part II

**22. Behold the lamb of God** *John 1:29*

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

**23. He was despised** *Isaiah 53:3, Isaiah 50:6*

He was despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

**24. Surely He hath borne our griefs** *Isaiah 53:4-5*

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him,

**25. And with His stripes we are healed** *Isaiah 53:5b*

And with His stripes we are healed.

**26. All we like sheep have gone astray** *Isaiah 53:6*

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

**27. All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn** *Psalms 22:7*

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn: they shoot out their lips, they shake their heads, saying:

**28. He trusted in God** *Psalms 22:8 (Matthew 27:43)*

He trusted in God that he would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.

**29. Thy rebuke hath broken His heart** *Psalms 69:20*

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was none; neither found He any to comfort Him.

**30. Behold, and see if there be any sorrow** *Lamentations 1:12*

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow

**31. He was cut off out of the land of the living** *Isaiah 53:8b*

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.

**32. But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell** *Psalms 16:10 (Acts 2:27)*

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; neither didst thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

**33. Lift up your heads, O ye gates** *Psalms 24:7-10*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord might in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

## Brisbane Concert Choir

The Brisbane Concert Choir at St Andrew's is an auditioned adult mixed voice choir. Formed in 1996 by Dr Guy Jansen, the choir has established an excellent reputation for its performances of diverse repertoire ranging from a cappella pieces to full symphonic works. Performances have included appearances with The Queensland Orchestra, Queensland Pops Orchestra and in prestigious festivals such as Brisbane Cathedrals Week and the 4MBS Festival of Classics. The Choir toured the North Island of New Zealand in 1999 and in June 2002, following the release of its first CD, Journey, the choir embarked on a very successful tour to north Queensland. The choir has recorded performances for broadcast on ABC-TV and 4MBS Classic-FM, and 2008 is shaping up to be a busy year with plans to record another CD and tour Western Australia.

### Sopranos

Katherine Chan  
Hee Chang  
Helen Fredericks  
Mary Gough  
Andrea Hall-Brown  
Jan Hungerford  
Stella Jenks  
Stephanie Lloyd  
Sarah McBratney  
Janet McKeon  
Caitlin McMorro  
Suzana Milosevic  
Judy Neal

### Altos

Milly Blakely  
Jennifer Brown  
Christine Campbell  
Cathy Dean  
Asabi Goodman

### Sue Gray

Kyla Hayden  
Melissa Hutchinson  
Nicolie Jenkins  
Barbara Lamb  
Cynthia Lie  
Lynne Maurer  
Joan Mooney  
Tricia Pezet  
Jordin Steele  
Ceri Takken  
Heather Wearne

### Tenors

Nathan Aspinall  
Ian Clarkson  
Lourens Feuth  
John Holmes  
Allen Kloeden  
Jack Parakh-Morgan

### Basses

Malcolm Alexander  
Robert Bray  
Andrew Campbell  
Bruce Campbell  
Michael Dalley  
Geoff Hines  
Ian Maurer  
Robin Maurer  
Tom McIntosh  
Mark McKeon  
Jim McNicol  
Timothy Reeves  
Ross Salomon  
Michael Scott

## Sinfonia of St Andrew's

The Sinfonia of St Andrew's was formed in 1995 for a performance of Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise conducted by Mansel Jones. Since then it has promoted its own orchestral concerts as well as appearing regularly with the Brisbane Concert Choir. The orchestra is an interesting mix of professional players, who perform regularly for the Queensland Orchestra and Queensland Pops Orchestra alongside students from the Conservatorium, University of Queensland and Queensland Youth Orchestra.

### 1st Violins:

Chen Yang (Leader)  
Lucy Bignall  
Marie Spiller  
Maree Williamson  
Matthew Gillet  
Sherryn Toomey

### 2nd Violins:

Jenny Khafagi  
Elisha Harrison  
Leslie Levy  
Anna McPherson

### Violas:

Eddie Whiting  
Leone McNaught  
Bronwyn Gibbs

### Cellos:

Kate Finch  
Ngaio Toombes

### Double Bass:

Lorna Sherwin

### Oboes :

Bernard Girard  
Robin Powell

### Bassoon:

Trevor Williamson

### Trumpets:

Geoff Spiller  
Brad Esbensen

### Timpani:

Jane MacKerras

### Harpsichord:

Emma Hadfield

### Organ:

Eduarda van Klinken

### General Manager:

Graham Evans

### Orchestral Manager:

Maree Williamson

## Choir Management

### Chairman

Ian Maurer

### Secretary

Nicolie Jenkins

### Treasurer

Tricia Pezet

### Committee

Stella Jenks  
Stephanie Lloyd  
Caitlin McMorro  
Heather Wearne

### Musical Director

Debra Shearer-Dirié

### Accompanist

John Woods

### Librarian

Mary Gough

### St Andrew's

### Liaison

Steven Nisbet

### Patron

Guy Jansen

Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

### 11. The people that walked in darkness *Isaiah 9:2 (Matthew 3:16)*

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

### 12. For unto Us a Child is born *Isaiah 9:6*

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

### 13. Pastoral Symphony

### 14. There were shepherds abiding in the field *Luke 2:8, Luke 2:9*

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo! The angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

### 15. And the Angel said unto them *Luke 2:10,11*

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

### 16. And suddenly there was with the Angel *Luke 2:13*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

### 17. Glory to God *Luke 2:14*

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

### 18. Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion *Zechariah 9:9,10 (Matthew 21:5)*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour....and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

### 19. The shall the eyes of the blind *Isaiah 35:5,6*

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

### 20. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd *Isaiah 40:11, Matthew 11:28,29*

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; and he shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He shall give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for He is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

### 21. His yoke is easy *Matthew 11:30*

His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

## Programme

### Part I

**1. Overture**

**2. Comfort Ye** *Isaiah 40:1-3*

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**3. Every Valley** *Isaiah 40:4*

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

**4. And the Glory of the Lord** *Isaiah 40:5*

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

**5. Thus saith the Lord** *Haggai 2:6,7; Malachi 3:1*

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

**6. But who may abide the Day of His Coming?** *Malachi 3:2*

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

**7. And He shall Purify** *Malachi 3:3*

And He shall purify the sons of Levi.... That they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

**8. Behold a Virgin shall conceive** *Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:23)*

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name EMMANUEL, God with us.

**9. O thou that tallest good tidings to Zion** *Isaiah 40:9, Isaiah 60:1*

O thou that tallest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tallest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, and be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

**10. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth** *Isaiah 60:2,3*

For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the

## Soloists

### Soprano— Miliča Ilic

Born in Serbia, Miliča moved to New Zealand in 1996, where she began her musical training at a young age undertaking singing lessons with Professor David Griffiths and singing with the Young Friends of Opera New Zealand. While undertaking a Bachelor of Music degree at the Queensland Conservatorium, Miliča sang the role of Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, Cupid in *Semele*, and Nanetta in *Falstaff*. She has been the recipient of first prize in the Margaret Nixon Vocal Competition twice, and won the Dame Joan Sutherland Singing Competition at the youngest recorded age of 19. Miliča was a semi-finalist at the Australian National Singing Competition in 2002, 2003 and 2005.

Miliča has studied German in Berlin at the Goethe Institute, and has worked with Professor Leandra Overmann in Walzburg, Germany. Currently Miliča is learning new roles and hoping to audition for the Young Artist Program for Opera Australia and Opera Queensland.

### Mezzo Soprano — Dorothy Williams

Born in Egypt of immigrant European parents, Dorothy migrated to Australia with her family when she was 2 years old. Her schooling and vocal studies were in Australia, where she studied with Susan Falk, Lauris Elms OBE and Joseph Ward OBE. She was a member of Australia's acclaimed Song Company for 4 years, with whom she toured widely in Australia, and also in Asia and New Zealand.

Dorothy has lived and worked as a singer and teacher in Brussels (Belgian National Opera) and in Parma, Italy. She has lived in Brisbane since returning from Europe in 1998. She currently sings with the Operatifi! vocal ensemble, who give a concert series in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Next February she will travel again with Operatifi! to Norfolk Island for the fifth annual "Opera in the Ruins" festival. Dorothy has also sung small principal roles and understudied major roles with Opera Queensland, as well as singing in the Opera Chorus for some years.

She has also performed the alto solos in the Queensland Orchestra's annual *Messiah* on two occasions, sings with Corda Spiriti and gives solo recitals. She maintains a small private teaching studio.

### Tenor — Thomas Moran

Thomas Moran is originally from Sydney. He moved to Brisbane to study at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, where he completed a Bachelor of Music (Performance) under the tutelage of Professor Janet Delpratt. He was a member of Opera Queensland's Developing Artist Program in 2002 and of the Opera Australia Chorus from 2002—2007. During his time in the chorus he went on in several principal roles, most notably as Lysander in Britten's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Tom returned to Brisbane with his family at the end of 2007 to commence studies with Joseph Ward OBE. His concert repertoire includes Bach's *St John's Passion*, Beethoven's *Symphony No 9*, Britten's *St Nicholas*, Bizet's *Te Deum*, and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*.

## Bass — Sam Hartley

Sam Hartley began his vocal studies at the University of Southern Queensland and then continued on to study at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music where he was a recipient of the Elizabeth Muir Vocal Scholarship in 1997. Sam's performances include the roles of Don Alfonso in *Così fan Tutti*, Dr Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Blind Ballad Singer in *Gloriana*, Lesbo in *Agrippina*, Zeus in *The Labours of Hercules*, John Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Second Armed Man in *Die Zuaberflöte*.

For Opera Queensland he has performed in productions of *Carmen*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Damnation de Faust* and in 2002-3 toured the role of Riccardo for the Opera Queensland schools production of *The Sound Garden* (which visited primary schools throughout Queensland) as well as being a member of the Moving Opera! Team (which visited secondary schools throughout Queensland). This year he is once again touring in the role of Peter in *Hänsel and Gretel*.

For the concert stage he has performed as soloist in Beethoven's *Mass in C major* and Schubert's *Mass in G*.

### Special Thanks

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Somerville House, who provided the harpsichord for today's performance.

## Programme Notes

Georg Frideric Handel's *Messiah* is well known to many choral singers, instrumentalists, audiences, and appreciators of choral music. Our performance today attempts to replicate the forces and stylistic nuances of this work as it would have been performed during Handel's time rather than the larger scale forces that became associated with this work in the nineteenth centuries and indeed today.

Handel encountered the oratorio in Italy during the early eighteenth century. Originally the genre intended to serve devotional purposes, however, took on the musical conventions of the opera. As the opera was ruled out during Lent, nobility turned its musical patronage to the oratorio. During its early days, the function of

the oratorio changed from devotional to entertainment.

The absorption of the oratorio into the London stage repertoire brought about further changes in the presentation of the oratorio. These included: a non-scenic presentation without costumes or actions; a change from Italian to English texts; the texts themselves became more alive; and the chorus played a more prominent role.

The *Messiah* text, based on purely biblical texts, was probably compiled by Charles Jennens. Handel's setting of this text took just over three weeks, although he revised the work several times after its initial completion. The work is guided by the idea of presenting the drama of Redemption, the struggle between light and dark, between God and Mankind.

The first part is rooted in the contest of good and evil. Handel's creative plan in the musical structure of each scene, of which the first part consists of six scenes, illustrates his mastership of maintaining a sense of dramatic flow throughout the work. During the first six scenes there is a treatment in the ever-changing expression of light and dark. It is represented by the contrasting tonalities and the fine musical details. After the rather somber darkness of the overture, the first sequence of sections shows gentle radiance: "Comfort ye my people, saith your God." The following scene introduces the fear of the Lord and the messenger of his covenant: "But who may abide the day of his coming." Two more scenes proceed contrasting Darkness and Light before the introduction of the Christmas message.

In the second part the contrasts build up and a final balance of forces is achieved. At first we reflect on Christ's suffering and death, and the personal agony of the rejected Christ. His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension into the reception of Heaven are projected through a series of sections contrasted by tonality with the chorus playing a much larger role during this second part resulting in the final vision of ultimate triumph.

The third part, a concluding anthem of praise, proclaims the end of the struggle and the victory of light.

The following statement by the English musicologist, Julian Herbage, beautifully sums up Handel's *Messiah* -

"Its keynote is simplicity and directness of statement, but it is a simplicity in which are 'hid all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'."

Debra Shearer-Diricé

